

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 4, 2012

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We commend your Administration's issuance of a temporary waiver on August 21, 2012, to enable U.S.-based nonprofit, nongovernmental organizations to provide humanitarian assistance to Iranians affected by earthquakes in northwest Iran. We urge you to extend the waiver beyond its October 5, 2012 expiration and to take needed additional steps to ensure humanitarian goods that are legally permitted under this waiver and existing licenses, such as food and medicine, are able to reach the people of Iran.

We are concerned that the expiration of the earthquake relief waiver will hinder ongoing relief and reconstruction efforts in the region at a time when it is still critically needed. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) reports that the earthquake affected 157,403 persons. The area affected by the devastating earthquake is one of the coldest regions in Iran, and the widespread destruction of housing and continued shortage of shelter is a serious concern as winter approaches. The IFRC is calling for donations of a wide range of supplies, including winter tents, heating stoves, winter clothes, sleeping bags, power generators and prefabricated houses. The U.S. Government should not block nongovernmental assistance efforts now by allowing the waiver to expire.

Similarly, we are deeply concerned by reports that U.S. sanctions are increasingly cutting off the export of critical medicines needed inside of Iran. In a September 4 article, *The Financial Times* reported that U.S. banking sanctions are "increasingly hitting vulnerable medical patients as deliveries of medicine and raw materials for Iranian pharmaceutical companies are either stopped or delayed, according to medical experts." We are troubled by this, and additional reports in *Al Monitor* and by International Civil Society Action Network indicates that some Iranian civilians are now dying as a result of sanctions impeding the export of life-saving medicines.

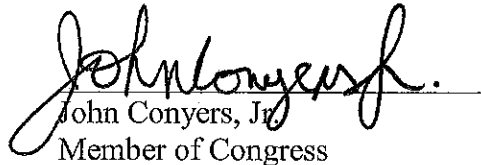
Congress authorized the licensed export of medicine under the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000 and has explicitly preserved this humanitarian exemption under all subsequent sanctions laws. We strongly encourage the Administration to take all necessary steps to ensure that food, medicine, and humanitarian relief for the people of Iran are not blocked by the implementation of U.S. sanctions.

The current impasse with Iran over its nuclear program should not prevent the American people from aiding earthquake victims or prohibit the export of life-saving medicines to the Iranian people. We stand behind your sentiments expressed in a 2011 speech to the Iranian people in which you discussed the repression of the Iranian government against the Iranian people and affirmed that "though times may seem dark, I want you to know that I am with you." It this time of crisis, we urge you to take the necessary steps to send a similarly unequivocal message to the Iranian people: the American people stand with you.

Sincerely,



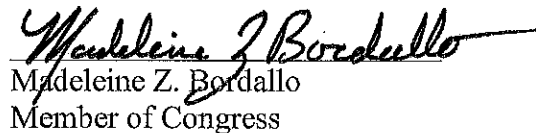
Dennis J. Kucinich
Member of Congress



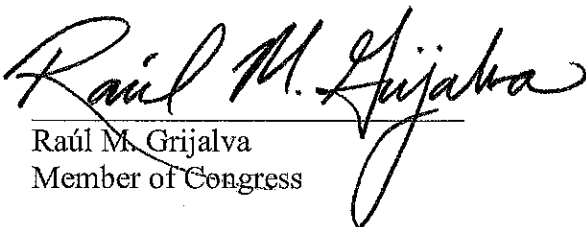
John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress



James P. Moran
Member of Congress



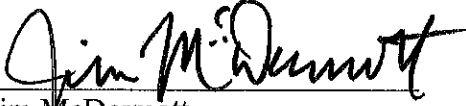
Madeleine Z. Bordallo
Member of Congress




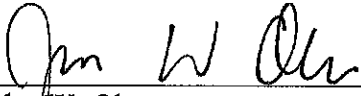
Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

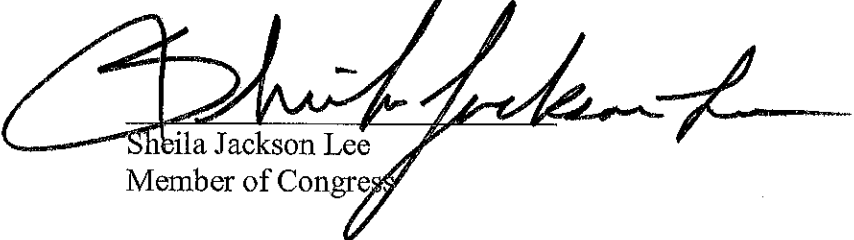


Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

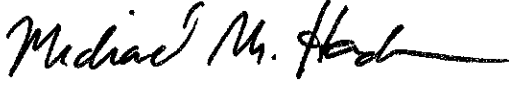

Jim McDermott
Member of Congress


Keith Ellison
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Michael M. Honda
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